

My name is Elizabeth Burton and I am a senior at Ledyard High School's Agri-Science & Technology program. I also serve as vice-president of the Ledyard Regional FFA chapter. My area of study is Agricultural Mechanics and I plan to attend college next year to major in mechanical engineering. When I first applied to the agriculture program I thought I wanted to work with animals and take part in the vet tech program because I've always enjoyed taking care of the animals we have at home. However, my agri-science teachers showed me how mechanics is so important to every aspect of agriculture and, since I like math and I really like to know how things work, I found myself taking more agricultural mechanics courses.

One of the best things about my agri-science classes is that I get to see not only how things work but to work with my hands and apply my new learning to real-world situations. At home I not only take care of my animals but I also have been helping to put new siding on our garage, making 3-D models of houses and barns, and trying to fix our ATV, which always seems to be breaking during the fall and winter. At school we're rebuilding an entry way to an old greenhouse and replacing the glass that has been damaged. In addition, I've been a member of our Ag Mechanics team in which you are tested on the knowledge you would only learn in an ag class. All this has convinced me that engineering is the field for me. I would never have had these experiences if there had never been an agri-science program to attend.

Agri-Science helps prepare students for the future, whether we want to attend college, join the military, or go to work. I feel we are better prepared because we've learned to work with our hands, solve real-world problems, develop the ability of public speaking, and take on leadership roles.

I believe that you should help provide these opportunities to more students. These programs provide us with priceless experiences to help make us better workers and contributing members of society. They also help us become able to speak in front of large crowds like I am doing now, and become outstanding leaders. Please increase funding for agricultural education. Thank you.